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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3598
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 000279

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DEPT FOR NEA/IPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/09/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [PTER](#) [NO](#) [KPAL](#)
SUBJECT: NORWAY HAS NO PLANS TO RECEIVE HAMAS

REF: SECSTATE 37552

Classified By: P/E Counselor Mike Hammer, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) We delivered reftel demarche to MFA Middle East Office Director Joern Gjelstad on March 9. Gjelstad took note of our comments and promised that he would convey our message upward. Gjelstad said that Norway did not have regular political level contact with Hamas; however, at the local government level the Norwegian mission in Ramallah does meet with Hamas officials regarding a Norwegian development assistance programs to local Palestinian communities. These meetings are characterized not by political discussions, but are programmatic, focused on the distribution of Norwegian aid and the progress of funded aid projects, and will continue.

¶2. (C) Norway's recent decision to follow the UN's terrorist designation list instead of the EU's does mean that Norway no longer officially considers Hamas a terrorist organization. Gjelstad assured us that this decision was taken to allow Norway to better facilitate peace efforts in Sri Lanka (the LTTE is listed as a terrorist organization by the EU, but not the by the UN), not with a view toward establishing a future relationship with Hamas. Gjelstad acknowledged that there is no domestic legal reason for Norway not to meet with Hamas, but this is a step that politically Norway does not envisage at this time and Norway had no current plans to receive Hamas at a senior or political level. He also assured us that Norway would not initiate any political overture to Hamas without close prior consultation with the US and other western donors.

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WHITNEY